

Office of the Provincial Chief Nursing Officer
A forum for Ontario's nursing community,
the Joint Provincial Nursing Committee and
the Nursing Secretariat.
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416 327-9689

Message from the Provincial Chief Nursing Officer



I am pleased to provide highlights of the most recent policy and program initiatives of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Nursing Secretariat, aimed at creating a stable and sustainable nursing workforce in Ontario. Ontario's Comprehensive Nursing Strategy was designed to support nurses at each stage along the nursing career continuum. The strategy encompasses several initiatives with the goal of enhancing recruitment and retention of Ontario's nurses. Key objectives of the strategy are to provide full-time employment opportunities, safe and healthy practice environments, and access to quality and ongoing nursing education.

All nurses play a key role in achieving the ministry's goal of continuous quality improvement of services to enhance access and timeliness to health care for the people of Ontario. Nurses contribute to positive patient, organizational, and system outcomes through their autonomous, evidence-based practice and in collaboration with other members of the health care team. As key partners in health care, the client, family, and informal caregivers work closely with nurses and other health care professionals to build a plan of care that enables positive health outcomes to be realized.

Stabilizing the nursing workforce will result in long term savings by avoiding costs associated with turnover and loss of human capital. Ontarians will be the chief beneficiaries of a stable nursing workforce that maximizes continuity of care and caregiver, and ensures coordination and integration of quality health services. To that end, this newsletter provides an overview of the new and ongoing investments in programs and initiatives funded by the Nursing Secretariat to strengthen the nursing profession and maintain ongoing workforce stability. Thank you for your continuous support and please enjoy a very happy and healthy new year!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Burkoski'.

Vanessa Burkoski,
RN(EC), BScN, MScN
Doctorate, Health Administration (c)
Provincial Chief Nursing Officer

The Nursing Secretariat News

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Minister's Greetings



As Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, I am pleased to share with you our government's vision for the nursing profession in this province.

Ontario's nurses are a valued and indispensable asset; they are integral members of the health care team, no matter the setting where they work. In spite of the current economic climate, the McGuinty Government remains steadfast in our commitment to the nursing workforce.

As part of this commitment, Ontario has developed a Comprehensive Nursing Strategy with the goal of supporting nurses at each step along their career. This strategy, as part of the HealthForceOntario health human resources strategy, encompasses numerous initiatives that will enhance education, recruitment and retention of Ontario's nurses, and help to promote stability in the nursing workforce now and in the future.

By targeting the unique needs of nurses at different stages in their careers, these key initiatives will assist in building a stable and sustainable nursing workforce and improve the overall health of the nursing profession. This, in turn, will help to provide better access to health care, ultimately benefiting all Ontarians.

Now more than ever, while many of you work so hard responding to the H1N1 pandemic, I want to say a special thank you for the terrific job you do, each and every day, providing quality care to Ontarians.

In the coming weeks and months, I hope to meet many of you in person, and I will be looking to you, our dedicated health care professionals, for your views and advice on how we can work together to improve the province's health care system.



Deb Matthews
Minister

Message from the Assistant Deputy Minister



Teamwork is at the heart of quality health care delivery. Effective teamwork including inter and intra professional collaboration, leads to improved patient outcomes, satisfaction and supports recruitment and retention of health care professionals.

The aim of HealthForceOntario is to foster the development of patient-centred, inter-professional teams as a cornerstone of our Health Human Resources Strategy to deliver high quality care to Ontarians. Inter-professional teams are an ideal approach in making the best use of the knowledge and skill sets of Ontarian's health care professionals.

We are moving beyond a system that is divided by professional silos and toward a patient-centered timely, accessible, effective and efficient system that recognizes the value of partnership and collaboration. Nurses in Ontario have always played a key role in health care and will continue to be an integral component of inter-professional teams as we move forward.

The importance of teamwork extends well beyond the frontlines of health care, to involve administrators, managers, researchers, government and other stakeholders working together to improve the delivery of health care. We must foster a spirit of teamwork at the systems level between different organizations and sectors. This is essential in order to put patients first and create a seamless system to meet the health care needs of Ontarians.

Teams and teamwork need support and the right resources to succeed. We are committed to supporting policies, practices, and research to help determine how best to implement inter-professional teams and realize our goal of improving patient outcomes.

As always, nurses will be central to the achievement of this goal and I look forward to our continued work together as we strive to make Ontario the employer of choice for health care professionals.



Joshua Tepper
Assistant Deputy Minister
Health Human Resources



Standing from left to right:

Colleen Lipskie, Monia Preiano, Anthony Ferretti, Shirley Kennedy, Jennifer Yoon, Meredith MacNaughton, Vanessa Burkoski, Dennis Torres, Amanda Yumbla, Tim Lenartowych, Etse Demissie, Winnie Ng and Paris Jalali. Not shown: Marsha Pinto.

Colleen Lipskie is a Senior Policy Analyst. Colleen co-chairs the mid-career working group with lead responsibilities in new roles for nurses, such as the Registered Nurse – Surgical First Assist (RN-SFA) and Registered Nurse performed Flexible Sigmoidoscopy. She is also involved in the Healthy Work Environment Initiative, a component of the 9,000 Nurses Commitment.

Monia Preiano is an Executive Assistant responsible for the coordination of daily operations in the office of the Provincial Chief Nursing Officer. Monia also contributes to the administration and management of the Nursing Secretariat.

Anthony Ferretti is a Policy Analyst with lead responsibilities for the Late Career Initiative and the Nursing Graduate Guarantee.

Shirley Kennedy is a Senior Policy Analyst. She has lead responsibility for the PDA Initiative, Nursing Education, Nursing Plans, and Internationally Educated Nurses. Shirley is the past president of the College of Nurses of Ontario and is currently seconded from the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Jennifer Yoon is a Senior Policy Analyst with lead responsibilities for the Nurse Practitioner Initiatives, Nursing Research and Nursing Health Human Resources Forecasting and Planning.

Meredith MacNaughton is Acting Manager of the Nursing Secretariat and supports staff in policy design and implementation. She has a Bachelor of Biological Science from Queen's University and a Master's in Medical Science from the University of Calgary.

Vanessa Burkoski is the Provincial Chief Nursing Officer. Vanessa is the executive leader of the ministry's Nursing Secretariat, providing strategic advice and nursing expertise to the ministry on a wide range of provincial health policy and program-specific issues relevant to nursing and health human resources planning.

Dennis Torres is a Senior Policy Analyst with lead responsibilities for the 9,000 Nurses Commitment.

Amanda Yumbla is an Administrative Assistant. Her key responsibilities include providing support to the manager and policy analysts in the branch. She also provides backup support to the Provincial Chief Nursing Officer.

Tim Lenartowych is a Senior Policy Analyst with lead responsibilities for 70 per cent Full-Time Employment of Nurses, Rural, Remote and Underserved Nursing Initiatives, and the Nursing Health Human Resources Planning Demonstration projects.

Etse Demissie is a Scheduler/Administrative Assistant. Her key responsibilities include organizing meetings and travel for the Provincial Chief Nursing Officer. She also provides administrative support.

Winnie Ng is the Financial Analyst at the Nursing Secretariat. She provides financial advice and support to the Nursing Secretariat on its various initiatives.

Paris Jalali is a Policy Analyst providing support on the Nursing Graduate Guarantee, the Late Career Nurse Initiative, and the Nursing Secretariat Newsletter and website.

Marsha Pinto is a Senior Policy Analyst who we are welcoming back to the Nursing Secretariat in the New Year.

Demonstration Projects in Nursing Health Human Resources Planning

The Demonstration Projects in Nursing Health Human Resources (HHR) Planning initiative addressed the wide variability in nursing health human resources (HHR) planning capacity across the province. Seventeen organizations were selected to design, implement, evaluate and share innovative nursing HHR planning practices. This initiative helped to foster local organizational capacity for nursing HHR planning, with implications and benefits for organizations throughout the province.

On October 16, 2009, over 120 representatives from health care organizations, LHINs and the Ontario government participated in an implementation workshop. The primary objective of this workshop was to facilitate implementation of the demonstration project tools, resources and best practices within Ontario health care organizations.

The Canadian Journal of Nursing Leadership will be publishing a special edition that features the work of the demonstration projects. The anticipated publication date will be early 2010.

Best Practice Guidelines Program

The ministry's Nursing Secretariat is pleased to continue to provide funding to the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO) Best Practice Guidelines Program. The RNAO launched the Nursing Clinical Best Practice Guidelines Program in 1999. The purpose was to optimize nursing practice everywhere by supporting nurses through the provision of evidence-based patient/client/resident and community care with the goal to improve patient outcomes. In 2007, the program was renamed the International Affairs and Best Practice Guideline (IABPG) program to reflect its increased activities with international partners and new opportunities to collaborate in building a stronger nursing community globally.

The guideline development process entails a rigorous methodology that includes a thorough topic selection and scope identification; systematic literature review; expert panels of health care professionals that develop evidence-based recommendations; and broad stakeholder consultations. The IABPG program focuses on individual, organizational and system outcomes to ensure effective and sustainable implementation in clinical and management decisions. The RNAO is now recognized as a world leader in guideline development, dissemination, implementation and evaluation.

Best Practice Spotlight Organization

Funded by the ministry's Nursing Secretariat (NS), the Best Practice Spotlight Organization (BPSO) initiative was launched in 2003, to provide support to organizations

in the implementation and evaluation of multiple RNAO best practice guidelines (BPGs). As part of this initiative, organizations (selected through a Request for Proposals process) establish a formal three-year partnership with RNAO as BPSO candidates. During this time, they focus on enhancing their evidence-based nursing practice and quality outcomes by implementing various best practice guidelines. After a three-year period, the candidates become BPSO designates. Designated BPSOs enjoy an on-going affiliation with RNAO and continue to implement and evaluate BPGs.

Today, there are 37 health care and academic organizations that are involved in this program. Through this initiative, all 42 clinical best practice guidelines and eight healthy work environment guidelines have been implemented in one or more BPSO organizations.

The Nursing Secretariat was pleased to host a pool party in support of Federated Health Charities. Guests from the Health Human Resources Strategy Division were treated to a poolside oasis experience and in return over \$745 was raised for charity at this event. A special thank you goes out to representatives from the division's senior management team who braved the chilly waters by taking a dip in the pool, all for a good cause.



Standing from left to right: Colleen Lipskie, Tim Lenartowych, Liz Santamaria, Jennifer Yoon, Anthony Ferretti, Vanessa Burkoski, Meredith MacNaughton, and Joshua Tepper

Sitting from left to right: Winnie Ng, Dennis Torres, and Monia Preiano

9,000 Nurses Commitment

The 9,000 Nurses Commitment is a workforce stabilization strategy that forms the cornerstone of Ontario's Comprehensive Nursing Strategy and is a key component of the province's health human resources strategy, HealthForceOntario.

Stabilizing the nursing workforce will help realize long-term savings by resulting in more efficient use of nursing health human resources and cost avoidance related to turnover and overtime.

Additionally, providing better access to quality care will help to improve the overall health of Ontarians, thereby reducing the burden on the health care system as a whole.

Celebrating Innovations in Health Care Expo 2009

On November 18, 2009, the Nursing Secretariat participated in the Celebrating Innovations in Health Care Expo 2009. Highlighting the spirit of innovation, participants of the expo displayed, demonstrated and shared creative ideas,



Shirley Kennedy, RN

cutting-edge technology and new approaches in health care at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre.

Ontario's Comprehensive Nursing Strategy that offers resources and support for nurses throughout the nursing career continuum was showcased at the Nursing Secretariat booth aptly titled "Nursing in Ontario: Choices, Opportunities and Resources." Creating opportunities for all nurses is a key component of building a sustainable nursing

workforce and the Nursing Secretariat shared all of their strategies and initiatives including those for Early Career Nurses, Mid-Career Nurses and Late Career Nurses. Shirley Kennedy, RN (photo), a senior policy analyst with the Nursing Secretariat, stated, "It was a great opportunity to increase awareness of our initiatives and rewarding to hear positive feedback from nursing colleagues."

The Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO) received the Minister's Award of Excellence for its innovative approaches to Long-Term Care; Improving Quality and Patient Safety: Strategies to Support Long-Term Care Staff in the Uptake of Best Practices.

Funded by the ministry's Nursing Secretariat, the Long-Term Care (LTC) Best Practices Initiative aims to enhance the quality of care for residents in LTC homes and facilitate a culture of evidence-based practice through the implementation of the Best Practice Guidelines by front-line staff in LTC homes.



*Front row (from left to right):
Saima Shaikh, Josie Santos,
Honorable Deb Matthews, Citalali Singh
and Doris Grinspun.
Back row (from left to right):
Maryanne D'Arpino, Gina De Souza,
Heather Thompson, Heather Woodbeck
and Heather McConnell.*

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Grow Your Own Nurse Practitioner Initiative

The Grow Your Own Nurse Practitioner (GYONP) Initiative involves re-purposing ministry funds already allocated to a nurse practitioner (NP) position, to sponsor a local registered nurse to obtain her/his NP education. The funds are used for salary continuance, education and related expenses while the nurse is receiving her/his NP education. Participating nurses sign a return of service agreement. A total of 44 nurses and 38 sponsoring organizations have participated in the GYONP initiative since its inception in 2006.

For further details about the program, eligibility and process please visit: www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/nursing_sec/materials.html

RPNAO Leadership/Clinical Practice Fellowship

The Registered Practical Nurses Association of Ontario (RPNAO) and the ministry implemented a Leadership/Clinical Practice Fellowship Program for Registered Practical Nurses (RPNs) to promote nursing knowledge and expertise, improve patient outcomes and retain nurses by valuing expert knowledge and supporting professional development opportunities.

Reflections of Fellowship Experience – Yvonne Ramlall, RPN:

I embarked on a 10-week learning experience, using a mentorship model. My mentor was Sara Robinson, acute pain service Nurse Practitioner at the Holland Orthopaedic and Arthritic Centre. My clinical area of practice is acute surgical nursing care, for patients who require joint replacements, including total hip or total knee replacements. I found a gap in the literature on patients' pain following total joint replacement upon discharge to home from an acute care facility. Therefore, the focus of my fellowship became post-discharge pain follow-up.

My mentor and I disseminated the findings in the Journal of Orthopaedic Nursing and presented at nursing conferences. I felt empowered because I was able to design and execute this study. The Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre and the RPNAO's support has been exceptional. Accountability, discipline, and motivation allowed me to put my very best effort into achieving the fellowship. The evidence obtained from the study will ultimately benefit patients in clinical health care.

Nursing Graduate Guarantee

The Nursing Graduate Guarantee (NGG) is the implementation of the government's commitment to provide every Ontario nursing graduate the opportunity to work full time in the province. The program provides a guaranteed 7.5-month employment opportunity in a supernumerary (above staffing) position to support new graduates' transition into full-time permanent positions, as they become available. The NGG helps create stability in the nursing workforce, improve work environments and increase opportunities for Ontario's nursing graduates.

The online system, Nursing Graduate Guarantee Management Module (NGGMM), allows employers to manage the funding, contracting, and reporting aspects of the Nursing Graduate Guarantee. The module is accessible through the HFOJobs website at: www.hfojobs.ca.

From the NGG's inception in 2007 to November 2009, over 7,800 matches have been made on the NGG portal and the NGG continues to be implemented for the 2009/10 fiscal year.

Policy Follows Evidence

Evidence-based decision-making has been a critical thrust for the Ontario government since 2002. The evaluation of employment trends, by Ontario researchers, has led to the creation of innovative initiatives that assure full-time employment for new graduates and support retention strategies for all nurses. NGG, funded by the ministry, promises newly graduated Registered Nurses (RNs) and Registered Practical Nurses (RPNs) up to six months of full-time employment. "It is reversing a 20-year-trend towards part-time and casual work and has been effective in creating full-time jobs for new nursing graduates," says Dr. Andrea Baumann, Co-Director, Nursing Health Services Research Unit (NHSRU)

McMaster University site. Over the past several years, researchers at the NHSRU McMaster site have monitored employment trends and evaluated the impact of the NGG on nurse graduates and employers across the province. Results for 2008 show a dramatic increase in full-time employment for new nursing graduates. Since 2005, full-time employment for RNs has increased from 58 per cent to 83 per cent and full-time employment of RPNs from 26 per cent to 56 per cent. The ideal outcome is a continuing upward trend to stabilize and retain a viable nursing workforce.

Personal Digital Assistant; Bringing Evidence to the Point of Care



Vanessa Burkoski, PCNO with PDA

The Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) initiative funded by the ministry is a pilot project providing PDAs with evidence-based practice resources to front-line nursing staff to improve access and integration of evidence at the bedside. PDAs have the potential to enhance a practitioner's ability to provide timely, high quality, and safe delivery of patient care, reduce errors, and increase the nurse's confidence and satisfaction in her/his professional practice.

Phase I (2007/08) of the initiative involved 30 health organizations and 1,454 devices across sectors, including correctional facilities.

Building on the success of Phase I of the initiative, Phase II (2008/09) provided funding for 24 organizations and over 1,000 devices.

Evaluation of the findings revealed positive impact on nursing clinical decision-making and patient care planning. The evaluation also revealed improvements in nurses' perceived quality of care delivery and job satisfaction.

The Late Career Nurse Initiative

The Late Career Nurse Initiative (LCNI) was designed to allow nurses 55 years of age and older to spend 20 per cent of their work time in less physically demanding nursing roles. The goals of this initiative include:

- i) retention of late career nurses
- ii) creation of alternate, less physically demanding/expanded roles
- iii) provision of healthy work environments (HWEs) for nurses
- iv) enhancement of the knowledge and expertise of late career nurses and allowing them to transfer their knowledge to novice nurses.

Over the past four years, more than 2,000 nurses every year have been provided with the opportunity to participate in this initiative. The LCNI has been enhanced this year to include a Retention Performance Target (RPT), which is an indicator measuring the organization's success in achieving the LCNI goal of retaining Ontario's late career nurses.

New Roles in Nursing

The HealthForceOntario health human resources strategy supports the creation of new health care provider roles, three of which are roles for nurses:

1) Registered Nurse – Surgical First Assist (RN-SFA)

In this role, RNs with additional education/competencies function collaboratively with the surgeon and operating room team providing pre-operative, intra-operative and post-operative care. To date, this role, which the ministry aims to expand across the system, has decreased surgical wait times and supported recruitment/retention strategies by presenting new opportunities for career enhancement and skill development. There are currently 20 sites involved in implementing this initiative and a total of 40 FTEs have been funded through this initiative.



*From left to right:
Dr. M.A. Cooper, Pascale P. Jacques,
Pam Hebert, Julie Hachez-Carriere,
Kim Shillington, Robin Wheeler and
Debra St. Louis*

2) Registered Nurse Performed Flexible Sigmoidoscopy

This new role involves RNs receiving specialized education and didactic training to obtain the competencies required to perform flexible sigmoidoscopy to detect colon cancer. The objective of the pilot is to determine if RN performed flexible sigmoidoscopy is acceptable and feasible in Ontario. The initiative continues to be implemented in three original sites, as well as three new sites across Ontario.



*Registered Nurse Robin Wheeler, from
Hotel Dieu Hospital, Kingston, working with
Dr. Andrew Petrakos from Windsor Regional
Hospital*

3) Nurse Practitioner with Specialty Education in Anaesthesia

In January 2009, the University of Toronto began offering the Certificate in Anaesthesia Care Program, designed to provide advanced education for Nurse Practitioners interested in developing their knowledge and skills related to patient care along the continuum of anaesthesia care including: pre-operative, peri-operative, post-operative and ambulatory care. Completion of this certificate promotes the development of skills and knowledge in the clinical care of patients in pain and/or receiving sedation and anaesthesia. The first cohort of four students is currently in their last semester of education and will be incorporated into Anaesthesia Care Teams.

Tuition Support for Nurses

The Tuition Support Program provides nurses with tuition reimbursement for their undergraduate education if they choose to work in rural, remote and underserved communities (as part of a return of service agreement). This program is administered collaboratively between the NS and the ministry's Underserved Area Program.

For more information, please visit:
www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/ministry/recruit/tuition_nurs.html

Nursing Research Fund 2009/10

The NS and the ministry's Research Unit are pleased to announce the Nursing Research Fund competition for 2009/10. The ministry identifies research priorities and provides annual funding for nursing research. The ministry recognizes the need for evidence-based solutions and strategies to address key nursing health human resource issues such as recruitment, retention, nurse preparation, improvements to work environments, job satisfaction and utilization of the workforce.

This competition is open to proposals for Ontario-based research that aligns with the specific priorities/themes identified in the NRF guidelines, to build nursing research capacity that facilitates collaboration among nursing researchers and decision-makers.

The deadline for career awards is February 26, 2010.

For more information, please visit:
www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/ministry/research/nursing_research_fund.aspx

LHIN Engagement Initiative – 70 Per Cent Full-Time Nursing

A key government commitment is movement towards 70 per cent of nurses working full-time (FT) in Ontario. This movement promotes enhanced continuity of care, leading to improved patient and nurse outcomes. According to the membership data collected by the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO), the province has seen a 14.5 per cent increase in FT nursing employment since 2003.

In 2008/09 the NS implemented the 70 per cent FT Nursing Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) Engagement Initiative to provide LHINs with nursing HHR planning support in moving towards 70 per cent FT nursing employment. The NS is pleased to be expanding this initiative in 2009/10.

CNO Statistics

2009 Employment in Nursing in Ontario:

	RN		RPN		NP		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Full-time	60,907	65.4	16,865	58.6	922	82.3	78,694	63.9
Part-time	24,626	26.4	9,576	33.2	169	15.1	34,371	27.9
Casual	7,638	8.2	2,359	8.2	29	2.6	10,026	8.1
Total	93,171	100	28,800	100	1,120	100	123,091	100

Source: College of Nurses of Ontario – Membership Highlights, 2009. Available online at: <http://www.cno.org/about/stats/reports.htm>. The data in this report provides a “point in time” snapshot of the available labour supply of nurses who renewed their membership for the practice year. Nurses who became members of the College during the current year are not included.

The CNO 2009 Membership Highlights indicate that a total of 123,091 nurses were employed in nursing in Ontario, an increase from 120,265 in 2008. The CNO 2009 Highlights also provide the working status of nurses in each nurse category. Since 2008, the full-time employment rate for RNs has increased from 64.7 to 65.4 per cent; for RPNs from 56.3 to 58.6 per cent and 80.8 to 82.3 per cent for NPs. These statistics indicate the trend of increased, full-time nursing employment. Higher rates of full-time employment help reverse the debilitating casualization of the nursing workforce that was experienced in Ontario a decade ago.

The Nursing Secretariat

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An electronic version of this newsletter can be found on the Nursing Secretariat website.

The de Souza Institute for Oncology Nursing

The Institute addresses the need for increasing educational opportunities for nurses in the field of oncology, thereby facilitating Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) oncology certification, to meet the demand for future oncology nurses.

Since March 2009, the Institute has been providing courses through various modalities (workshops, distance education and training programs). A total of 154 nurses wrote the 2009 CNA exam and 31 oncology nurses across the province have received a 2009 de Souza Fellowship Award.

For information on educational opportunities at the de Souza Institute for Oncology Nursing, please visit the website at: www.desouzanurse.ca

Nursing Week 2009

Weeneebayko General Hospital



Left to right: Yee Lee, Buffy Sutherland, Shirley Wesley, Nicole Helmer, Kathy Faries-Quachegan, Vanessa Burkoski, Andrea Gaudet, and Carlene Linklater

Sudbury Corrections Facility



Left to right: Trevor Deshevy, Vanessa Burkoski, Fran Lajeunesse and Tammy French

Sudbury Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic



Left to right: Mary Geroux, Nina Hoyt, Kim Demers, Vanessa Burkoski and Marilyn Butcher

Sudbury Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic



Left to right: Paul Andre Gauthier, Gisele Guenard, Kim Demers, Nina Hoyt, Nicole Shank, Marilyn Butcher, Mary Geroux, Vanessa Burkoski, Roberta Heale and David McNeil